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DOES SEDENTARIZATION PROMOTE GENDER INEQUALITY? A CASE STUDY FROM THE KALAHARI

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Sedentarization has been implicated in the reduction of gender equality in some spheres of formerly nomadic Ju/'hoansi (!Kung) and Nharo Basarwa (Bushmen) life. Concomitant with the shift to sedentism, both the Ju/'hoansi and Nharo have undergone significant economic transformations, and these have been accompanied by changes in attitudes towards gender. Gender equality is examined among the Central Kalahari Basarwa who inhabit Kutse, a sedentary community in which economic change and the adoption of neighbouring people's attitudes have not been as widespread as elsewhere. Qualitative and quantitative studies show that gender egalitarianism is still quite strong at Kutse. It is suggested that not all foragers who become sedentary also become less egalitarian. Instead, the adoption of the economics and attitudes towards gender from non-foraging neighbours facilitates the emergence of gender inequality in those Basarwa societies formerly noted for their egalitarianism. Some current development programmes designed by Westerners exclude women and contribute to the increase in gender inequality which is emerging in these societies.

In a number of seminal papers, Pat Draper describes a general loss of autonomy and status among formerly nomadic, now sedentary, female Ju/'hoansi (!Kung) Basarwa (San or Bushmen) from Ngamiland, Botswana (Draper 1975a; 1975b). Prior to this loss, Ju/'hoansi women were noted for their voice in political matters, which now is in the hands of men. Traditional Ju/'hoansi considered female and male work as equally important with minimal sex-typing of tasks. Likewise, property and ownership were not divided along gender lines. Socially, Ju/'hoansi women were equal to men. Additional studies indicate a reduction in gender equality even among children in settled camps when compared to their nomadic counterparts (Draper & Cashdan 1988). Since the early 1980s, sedentism in Ngamiland has been accompanied by profound economic changes introduced, or at least influenced by, neighbouring patriarchal Bantu-speaking peoples. Ju/'hoansi initially became sedentary in order to work for neighbouring agro-pastoralists, to maintain cattle and small livestock, and to farm. During sedentarization, interaction with non-foraging Bantu-speakers increased in frequency, particularly for Ju/'hoansi men. Consequently, it is difficult, if not impossible, to disentangle the impact of sedentism on gender egalitarianism from that of profound economic change, or from the adoption of the patriarchal values of neighbouring peoples; each has been accompanied by the other (for discussions of patriarchy and sexual asymmetry among neighbouring Bantu-speakers, see Alverson 1978: 12, 49; Lee 1993: 131; Molamu 1992: 82-3).

Draper's intriguing observations prompted my study of the effect of sedentism on gender roles among hunting and gathering people who had become sedentary without undergoing such profound economic, social and political changes. Based on these criteria, I selected for study a group of recently sedentary Basarwa living at Kutse, located just outside the Central Kalahari Game Reserve, Botswana (fig. 1). Unlike the sedentary Ju/'hoansi and other sedentary Kalahari groups, Kutse Basarwa remain primarily, though not exclusively, foragers (Kent 1992; 1993a; in press a).

This article also draws on Loermans's (1992) observations during the late 1980s of Nharo Basarwa women living in the Ghanzi District (fig. 1). Loermans notes a loss of autonomy and equality among Nharo women similar to that described by Draper. She attributes this change to the same factors identified by Draper: to sedentism and the adoption of their patriarchal neighbours' economy and customs. As with the Ju/'hoansi, the Nharo have experienced massive economic change in conjunction with adopting a sedentary settlement pattern. The Nharo, sometimes referred to as 'Farm Bushmen', have been sedentary for decades, in fact for longer than the Ju/'hoansi (e.g., Guenther 1979). Most Nharo became sedentary in order to work on European-owned farms, slowly adopting the economic practices and some of the customs of their European and Bantu-speaking Batswana neighbours (Guenther 1979: 86-7).

Inter-Basarwa group comparisons

The individual studies upon which this article is based represent different time periods, different investigators, different linguistic groups, and different data collection methods. Even so, there are similarities that facilitate comparison. One is the fact that both the Kutse Basarwa and the Ju/'hoansi were nomadic and highly egalitarian in the not too distant past.¹ Both groups were primarily hunter-gatherers (the former remain so, but the Ju/'hoansi today are better characterized as practising a mixed subsistence strategy). The Nharo are somewhat different, because they became sedentary and adopted a mixed economy much earlier than did the other two groups. Most Nharo abandoned full-time hunting and gathering a century ago and have interacted closely with Europeans and Bantu-speakers for at least as long (Barnard 1992; Guenther 1975; 1976; 1979; 1986).

In some respects, the investigators have used a similar research strategy for each group. For instance, each of the studies has a diachronic perspective, although Draper's investigations span over a 25-year period, much longer than Loermans's or my own research. Loermans's work covers only three years: however, her observations are more continuous during those three years than is the case with the Kutse studies. My research incorporates qualitative methods with quantitative time allocation, interview, and material culture inventories collected over eight cold dry seasons (1987-94) and one rainy season (1989-90). Draper's research combines both qualitative and quantitative methods, while Loermans's study is mostly qualitative. Gender equality at Kutse is examined with both qualitative and quantitative data so that both can be compared to the data collected by Draper and Loermans. If viewed critically, differences in methodologies, ethnic groups, and time periods among the three studies can be

accounted for and the noted changes in gender roles can be shown not to be an artefact of dissimilar research goals, data collection, or analyses.

Changes affecting Ju/'hoansi gender relations

Draper (1975a) notes two fundamental factors influencing gender equality among the Ju/'hoansi. One is the shift from a nomadic to a sedentary mobility

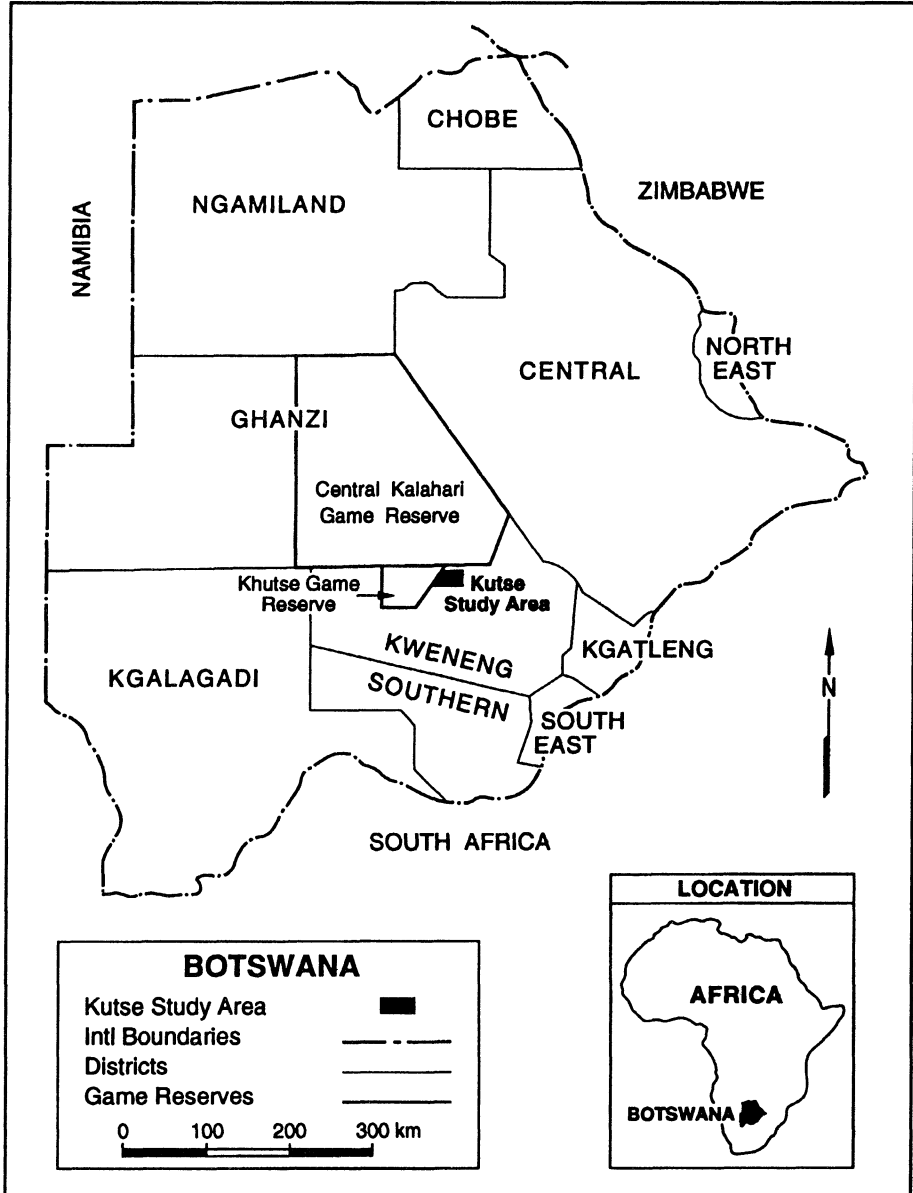


FIGURE 1. Map of the Kutse area, Ghanzi District where the Nharo studied by Loermans reside, and Ngamiland where the Ju/'hoansi studied by Draper live.

pattern, the other the acquisition of subsistence activities practised by Bantu-speaking neighbours, the Herero and Batswana. In the Ju/'hoansi case, these changes encouraged an attachment to place, with more substantial dwellings and larger material inventories, as well as the adoption of economic practices which required more processing time and effort, and a different, more rigid, division of male and female labour (Draper 1975a; 1975b: 602).

Sedentary Ju/'hoansi construct substantial mud and dung huts that require more upkeep than did traditional grass structures (Draper 1975a: 102). Hut maintenance activities are routinely conducted by women because men are commonly engaged in activities away from camp. Often fences enclose Ngami-land camps, which are situated spatially apart emphasizing privacy, one of the contributors to increased gender inequality among the Ju/'hoansi (Draper 1975a 104-7; Yellen 1990: 102). Yellen (1990: 104) describes a pattern wherein more activities occur inside Ju/'hoansi huts than did traditionally. The location of hearths, which is the social focal point in a camp, has moved from just outside the mud-walled huts to inside. Yellen writes (1990: 104) that this change in the location of hearths creates a 'camp design [that] can be said to have been unambiguously transformed from "close" to "distant" within a few years'.

Men's employment often takes them far from their home camps to distant Herero or Batswana cattleposts, to European-owned farms in what today is Namibia, or occasionally to mines in South Africa (Draper 1993: personal communication). As a result, men have both economic and political power that is not as readily available to women. Thus, gender inequality is encouraged because primarily men have access to money and knowledge of the outside world (Brooks *et al.* 1984).

Draper (1975a: 85) suggests that while still foragers, both Ju/'hoansi men and women tended to work away from camp when gathering food; this traditional pattern contributed to the gender equality recorded by investigators who conducted research in the Kalahari between the 1950s and the 1970s. The absence of both sexes from camp during subsistence activities is not as common in the 1980s and 1990s. Draper describes a pattern wherein sedentary Basarwa males tend to venture further and are more mobile than sedentary females who remain at or near camp since they no longer forage as much for food. Sedentary 'men were away from the home village, women were home-bound; men were likely to be employed by non-Bushmen away from their home village, women were not' (Draper & Cashdan 1988: 361). Draper (1975a) writes that men are absent from camp more frequently in order to tend livestock or earn cash.

As men's absences increase, women begin to specialize in domestic chores in and near camp. Sedentary children, particularly boys, perform more chores in and out of camp than they did before sedentarization. While sedentary boys spend more time away from camp and away from adults than did nomadic children, the same is not true for sedentary girls (Draper 1975a: 100; Draper & Cashdan 1988). Likewise, where nomadic Basarwa had willingly exchanged tasks normally associated with one or the other sex, sedentary Basarwa have developed a more limited tolerance for crossing sex roles (Draper 1992: 52-3). Draper notes (1992: 53; emphasis added) that in the 1990s 'women's tasks, such as collecting water and cutting thatching grasses, were *scorned* by men'.²

Changes affecting Nharo gender relations

The modern Nharo economy can be characterized as a mixture of foraging, food production, wage and self-employment, and dependency on other groups (Loermans 1992: 8). Loermans imputes changes in gender equality among Nharo Basarwa to decreases in mobility, and to concomitant increases in household chores, the adoption of wage labour, food and livestock production, self-employment, and community work.

Loermans (1992: 22) writes that female Nharo 'labour has not been integrated in the market economy, whereas male labour to a certain extent is incorporated in the cattle industry, in the mines and in tourism. At the same time, it becomes more difficult for women [in contrast to men] to acquire knowledge about the outside world due to their decreased mobility'. Similar to Draper's view of the Ju'hoansi, Loermans (1992: 22) attributes the marginalization of Basarwa women in the Ghanzi District to sedentism. Loermans additionally suggests that the disproportionate accumulation of property among males, who are able to acquire more possessions than are females, has helped to create gender inequality. One reason for this disparity is that men in the Ghanzi District can work in the cattle industry, sell curios, and obtain jobs, whereas women do not have such opportunities. According to Loermans (1992), this situation is made worse by development projects that favour men. Thus, the sedentary lifestyle of Ghanzi District Basarwa encourages men to travel more often and farther than women, to have wider opportunities, and to have more control over resources (Loermans 1992).

Nharo gender relations in the 1960s and 1970s have been described by Barnard (1980) and by Guenther (1983-4) as more egalitarian than that observed by Loermans, at least in the realm of ritual. Such discrepancies could result from the twelve to thirty-years difference between these studies, during which time the Nharo became more integrated into the economies of Bantu-speakers and European expatriates. However, I suggest later that the differences are the result of dissimilar research methodologies and interpretations. In either case, changes in Nharo mobility appear to be as difficult to separate from changes in economics and social attitudes as they are for the Ju'hoansi. Research among the Central Kalahari Basarwa residing at the Kutse community allows us to separate changes in mobility from changes in economic practices so that we can study the effects of both.

Gender relations at Kutse: a recently sedentary Kalahari community

Kutse Basarwa speak several linguistic dialects, including Kūa, G/wi, and G//ana. All are immigrants from the Central Kalahari Game Reserve during the past ten to thirty years. In most respects, they resemble those Basarwa described by Silberbauer (1981; though Silberbauer's study was conducted thirty to forty years ago when people were still nomadic).

The majority of individuals arrived at Kutse ten to fifteen years prior to my initial observations of the community in 1987. Residents therefore have been sedentary for a shorter period of time than the Ju'hoansi, who have been sedentary for twenty-five to thirty years. However, at the time of Draper's earlier observations during the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Ju'hoansi had

probably been sedentary for a time period equivalent to the sedentary Kutse residents of the late 1980s. The extent of economic and social change among the Ju/'hoansi compared to Kutse appears to be more significant in explaining change in gender roles than the length of time each group has been sedentary.

Kutse hunting and gathering. Kutse Basarwa are neither Stone Age hunter-gatherers nor degraded pastoralists. Rather, they are twentieth-century foragers who emphasize and depend on wild foods for their subsistence, but not exclusively so. Most Kutse residents own a few goats and all receive government food assistance, which partly replaces the need for wild plants. Although wild vegetables and fruits have lessened in importance, they remain an essential part of the Kutse diet, depending on the rains for a particular year. Kutse hunters use only traditional hunting techniques; no one owns or has access to a gun or a horse. Hunters provide over 95 per cent. of the meat in the diet (Kent 1992). It is interesting to note that the amount of meat per person per year obtained through hunting is very similar to the figure which Silberbauer (1981: 204) reports for G/wi hunters in the 1950s and 1960s (96 kg at Kutse 1987-1990 versus 93 kg for G/wi over thirty-five years ago). Unlike elsewhere in the Kalahari, there is no meat trade at Kutse, partly because Kutse is not part of or near a cattlepost and partly because there is no store, clinic, government administrative office or school in the community which would create a market for such a trade.

I have described Kutse hunting elsewhere (Kent 1993a; 1993b; in press a) and need only note here that whereas trapping was considered by most anthropologists to be a male-only activity, there is evidence today which suggests that trapping is not ideologically restricted to males (Kent 1993a). Even though some observers record in passing that women routinely construct small bird snares from wild plants, the activity is not discussed further and these contributions to the diet are not measured (but see Kent 1993a; in press a; Silberbauer 1981). Kutse inhabitants in 1988 began to use threads from plastic maize meal (mealie meal) bags to make small antelope snares which replaced those made of wild plants called *gwi* (*Sansevieria scabrifolia*). Currently, mealie meal bag antelope snares are woven by women and set in large bush traps by their husbands or male friends. These bush traps funnel animals to the woven snare. Meat from the traps belongs to the women who made or own the snares, a custom recorded among several traditional Basarwa groups, including the Ju/'hoansi of the 1950s and early 1960s (Marshall 1976; Lee 1979). In one instance I observed a woman performing a common hunting ritual thought to encourage animals into one's traps (see Kent 1993a: fig. 2). This ritual is usually considered by anthropologists to be solely a male rite, because hunting in general and trapping in particular are usually considered to be male-only activities. At Kutse, we are able to see that these traditionally male activities, as categorized by anthropologists, were closed to women only because women did not have the skills necessary to participate, not for ideological reasons.

Bow and arrow hunting is perceived differently from trapping because of the use of poison arrows. Many Kutse interviewees said that a woman could not hunt with a bow and poison arrows. When I inquired why, a few answered that women are not strong enough (the poison is slow acting and it may take days

for hunters to track a dying animal). However, other interviewees of both sexes replied that women could not hunt with bows and poison arrows because women do not have the knowledge and skill to shoot arrows or to extract the poison without causing blindness or death to themselves. A number stated that if women knew how to extract the poison and use it safely, then no reason would exist as to why women could not use bows and arrows. In other words, Kutse women do not hunt with poison arrows mainly because they do not possess the knowledge to do so safely (e.g., to prevent blindness when handling the poison).

It is not surprising that Kutse women do not particularly care to learn hunting skills. In their society, hunting is not considered to be an activity superior to other activities. Hunting is viewed as a necessity of life, just as collecting is also a necessity of life. Neither task is an absolute category in terms of gender; men routinely gather wild plants, and women trap birds and other small animals (at least among the Central Kalahari Basarwa; e.g., Silberbauer 1981). Thus there is little reason for women to hunt when men already do so. There is even less reason for women to learn the skills to hunt. Unlike trapping, hunting takes much time and continual practice in order for anyone, male or female, to become and then to remain proficient. Only foreign anthropologists consider hunting as somehow better than collecting, or as an activity in which everyone should want to participate. Such a view is a reflection of the tendency of Westerners to arrange sex-specific activities hierarchically, as better or worse. Highly egalitarian Kutse residents do not make such distinctions, particularly in terms of activities. This attitude is not unique to Central Kalahari groups; the same is true for the Ju/'hoansi. Lee (1979: 235) writes that:

I did not get the feeling that women's nonparticipation in hunting was a sore issue between the sexes (i.e., that the women wanted to hunt but the men would not let them, or that the men wanted women to share in the work of hunting but the latter did not want to). It was not an area of conflict. Much more in evidence was the women's complaints that the men did not bring in enough meat.

Men within a sharing partnership usually bring in enough meat to sustain a group, and when they do not, women hunting with arrows would probably not increase the overall success rate by much. The cause of unsuccessful hunting which affects all hunters in a sharing network is often based on the availability of animals and plants. This availability depends on the timing and amount of rainfall and the whims of a capricious god. In other words, since the overall hunting success of a sharing network depends on factors beyond human control, except for a few rituals, having women hunt would not alter the situation or ensure more meat (note that here I am referring to the perceptions of people concerning the overall hunting success of several sharing partners as a sharing unit and not to the success of an individual, which is thought to be based on other factors).

Nevertheless, Kutse inhabitants like to eat meat. As among the Ju/'hoansi (Lee 1979: 235-6), if men do not hunt when there is no meat in camp, there will be snide comments heard or grumbling at the least. However, inhabitants also complain bitterly when there are no wild plants or government-provided flour available, and only meat is eaten for several days. When I questioned camp members about their complaints of having no plant foods to eat, they stated that humans cannot live by meat alone. They claim that if people have only meat to

eat, then they will grow skinny; they must have both meat and plant foods (interestingly, the belief that they will grow skinny is the same one given for why people must eat meat, and not only vegetables, when they complain about the absence of meat).

There is no prohibition against a woman touching men's hunting equipment, *as long as she is not menstruating*. On many occasions I observed women and children reaching into men's hunting bags in order to get a knife or other object. I also witnessed a woman shooting her husband's bow and arrows when a springbok strayed into camp (e.g. Kent 1993a: 489). If a menstruating woman accidentally touches hunting equipment (traps, arrows, spears, etc.), medicinal plants and a brief ritual must be performed so that animals can be successfully killed (a traditional ritual still practised at Kutse).

Central Kalahari women today (and traditionally) use digging sticks occasionally to kill small animals. Women also butcher animals smaller than a hare without male assistance and routinely assist men with the butchering of larger animals. When men are busy, women butcher springbok and other animals by themselves. I observed women checking their husbands' traps while their spouses were away from the Kutse community. As previously noted, the concept of man the hunter and woman the gatherer has a very fuzzy boundary at Kutse (Kent 1993b). While economic changes have occurred at Kutse, their effects have not been of the same magnitude as elsewhere in the Kalahari (for comparison see Cashdan 1980; Draper & Kranichfeld 1990; Sugawara 1988; Tanaka 1987).

Kutse sedentism. Kutse residents are *not* forced to live at Kutse. Traditionally, Central Kalahari Basarwa moved depending on the season and availability of water. During the relatively brief rainy season, families gathered at pans (clay-lined depressions that seasonally hold water) where they might remain for four to six weeks. When pans were dry, which was the case during most of the dry season, people moved every four to six weeks searching for wild melon patches from which they could quench their thirst. They dispersed into smaller family groups later in the hot dry season when resources became more scattered.

A few families which migrated from the Central Kalahari Game Reserve into the area that is now the Khutse³ Game Reserve, while looking for water and melons, had to leave the area when the game reserve was established in 1972. The last family to leave came to the Kutse community during the early dry season of 1987. Having developed attachments to the general vicinity, families voluntarily chose to stay as close as possible to the area which they had formerly inhabited. Since the first families set up camps at the Kutse community, others joined them from the Central Kalahari Game Reserve borehole communities.⁴

Kutse residents today live year-round in dispersed camp clusters located just outside the game reserve. There is only one reason why people are sedentary at Kutse – the presence of a borehole at the Khutse Game Reserve. The community is located in a part of the Kalahari that has no permanent standing water. During the mid to late dry season before the drilling of boreholes, people had to rely on melons and other plants for their liquids. Interview responses as to why residents choose to live at Kutse are varied; the availability of year-round water and the presence of their relatives are the two most common ones

mentioned. Only one Kutse Mosarwa (singular of Basarwa) said that he would leave Kutse to return to a Central Kalahari Game Reserve borehole community if he did not receive the government-provided food; others said that they would remain even without government food, because they have relatives at Kutse. In fact, from January to July 1990, the food programme did not operate and thus no free food was distributed. As a result, women were forced to spend more time collecting plants and processing them, but people did not abandon the community.

Camps at Kutse are most commonly occupied by nuclear or extended families that form a social and economic unit (or household), although unrelated friends may reside together as long as they participate in the same sharing network. Sharing partners usually inhabit camps located within shouting distance of each other (also see Kent 1993a; 1995). Sharing networks, which form the basis of the most common kind of social interaction at Kutse, are still strong. There are a few fenced camps, which promote privacy, but a larger percentage of camps is not fenced.

Unlike the substantial mud and dung huts built at Dobe, camps at Kutse consist of both grass huts and windbreaks. These grass huts are larger and more elaborate than those built while the people are still nomadic, yet maintenance is minimal. Both men and women make repairs, although women spend more time fixing or building windbreaks and huts than do men. In contrast to the Dobe area, most Kutse activities occur outdoors at the windbreak, including sleeping, eating, manufacturing and entertaining. Huts are primarily used to escape rain or extreme heat in the absence of shade. When the rain stops or the shade returns, residents resume their activities at or near an outdoor hearth. Since many objects are stored outside on the windbreak fence, in a tree, or on an outdoor storage platform where all can see them, I believe that the primary function of huts at Kutse is to store possessions not in use out of the way of rain, goats and dogs. In contrast, huts in Ngamiland are used to hide objects which people do not want to share and this concealment greatly affects Ju/'hoansi traditional social relationships (Yellen 1990).

Camps are occupied from six months to three years before they are relocated within the Kutse community. Individual camps within a cluster, usually indicating a sharing network (Kent 1995) or what Silberbauer (1981) calls a clique, often move within a few months of each other either to continue or to dissolve their alliance. Residents frequently visit friends and relatives living at other communities in the general region. While away, they still consider themselves as belonging to the Kutse community. People from other communities who come to Kutse are labelled as visitors, even if they reside at Kutse for a year or more.

Similar to the pattern described for highly egalitarian nomadic Ju/'hoansi, sedentary Kutse women and men continue a pattern of absence from camp (although not necessarily for the same reasons as before). Both women and men leave to forage for food, visit relatives and friends, collect firewood, or fetch water from a borehole located about an hour's walk away. When domesticated plants from the government or from a garden are available (the latter only noted in 1988), women gather wild plants less often, but they do not necessarily remain in camp for longer periods. Instead, they often visit other camps at Kutse, a few of which are thirty minutes' to an hour's walk away. Camps might

be abandoned during parts of the day more frequently now than when people were nomadic, due to the close proximity of other camps. On a day when men are not hunting or women are not collecting, both may stay in camp as they did traditionally and repair equipment, socialize with friends from nearby camps, or babysit for young children whose parents are absent. Perhaps a majority of the time, however, adults and children can be found visiting other camps, particularly those of their sharing partners.

Bantu-speaking neighbours. Ngamiland and Ghanzi Basarwa live close to strongly patriarchal societies (Lee 1993; Schapera 1984).⁵ For the Ngamiland Basarwa, neighbouring peoples include the Herero and Batswana and for the Ghanzi Basarwa they include European expatriates and the Batswana. Traditional gender relations among the Batswana, as one example, have been described as comparatively rigid and hierarchical. The division of labour by sex 'constitutes by our standards a very rigid, vertical, caste-like cleavage affecting every aspect of human relations Men have had and still do have enormous power over the disposition of a wife's labour. Generally men dominate women psychologically' (Alverson 1978: 12; see also endnote 5).

In contrast, Kutse Basarwa share their community with rural Bantu-speaking Bakgalagadi, who are culturally more like the Kutse Basarwa than like the village Bakgalagadi described by Kuper (1970; 1982) and by Solway (1986). The Bakgalagadi at Kutse do not have social or political hierarchies, nor do they see themselves as socially or politically superior to the Basarwa. The political and gender asymmetry noted for other Bantu-speaking groups, such as the Batswana and Herero (Alverson 1978; Lee 1993; Schapera 1984), is not as pronounced among the Kutse Bakgalagadi. Also unlike the village Bakgalagadi, and with only one exception, full-time Kutse Bakgalagadi residents do not own cattle and a few do not own any goats. All of the men regularly hunt and the women collect wild plants. More Kutse Bakgalagadi than Basarwa plant gardens. They also tend to grow a more diverse range of domesticated species, although yields are unpredictable for both groups and harvests are usually small to non-existent. Kutse Bakgalagadi camps are often indistinguishable from Kutse Basarwa camps. In sum, the Bantu-speakers with whom Kutse Basarwa interact most do not have the hierarchical or patriarchal characteristics of other Bantu-speaking groups or Europeans who live near Basarwa elsewhere in the Kalahari.

Measuring gender relations: qualitative studies

The Kalahari is much more culturally and physically diverse than many people realize (Kent 1992). This diversity makes it possible to contrast Kutse Basarwa with the Ju/'hoansi and Nharo. While it is difficult to disaggregate the impact of economic and mobility changes among the Ngamiland and Ghanzi Basarwa, those economic changes thought to be most responsible for altering women's status are not present at Kutse. For example, with only one exception, Kutse men have not worked in South African mines, nor do the majority work at distant cattleposts or farms owned by Bantu-speakers or Europeans. Kutse Basarwa do not own cattle or horses; neither can survive at Kutse due to a lack of water. According to Loermans (1992), Ghanzi men can sell curios to earn cash, but the same opportunity is not as available to women. When it is possible

to sell crafts, Nharo women are dependent on males to supply hides necessary for manufacturing the curios. In comparison, no such opportunity exists at Kutse on a scale large enough to be significant for either sex (i.e., the store 'Botswana Crafts' does not buy handicrafts at Kutse and only a small number of curios are occasionally sold to passing tourists). Therefore, at Kutse it is possible to examine the effects of sedentism divorced from the effects of drastic social and economic change.⁶

As noted above, Draper (1992: 53) identifies collecting water as a woman's task scorned by men in sedentary Ju/'hoansi communities. Likewise, Barnard (1980: 116, 122) reports that in the 1970s, sedentary Nharo women usually fetched water and collected firewood, although he also suggests that the relationship between the sexes among the Nharo was essentially equal. In contrast to sedentary Nharo and Ju/'hoansi, these two tasks are not sex-typed at Kutse. Old and young adults of both sexes gather firewood (however, male or female children rarely do). In addition, adults of all ages and children fetch water from the borehole, which is partly a social event in which I have not been able to discern a gender bias. Among children and young adults, collecting water is an opportunity to interact with friends of both sexes away from camp, an event enjoyed by males and females. In general, Kutse children spend much time playing. Nomadic Ngamiland children also are described as relatively free from chores whereas sedentary children, particularly boys, tend livestock and perform other tasks (Draper 1975a: 77, 100; also see Draper & Cashdan 1988). Kutse residents again follow more closely the pattern observed among nomadic Ju/'hoansi than that described for the sedentary ones.

The Kutse Basarwa who own goats practise what I have referred to elsewhere as 'opportunistic herding' (Kent in press *a*). Animals are chased out of camp in the morning and are left to return on their own in the evening. Both male and female adults and children participate in releasing goats from their corral, and in separating the young from mature goats who are then chased out of camp. At dusk, adults and children of both sexes round up and corral the goats that have returned. Families who take their goats to the borehole for water allocate the task to adults and children of both sexes. In these families, goats are usually taken to the borehole approximately every other day and are left to wander back to camp on their own. The joint effort of male and female adults and children tending goats is unlike that reported in Ngamiland or in the Ghanzi District.

Elsewhere in the Kalahari, women, children and the elderly are described as joining or following men to cattleposts or farms where men are employed (Loermans 1992: 9; Draper 1975a; 1975b). The same event does not occur at Kutse, because most Kutse Basarwa (both males and females) who work for village Bakgalagadi or Batswana do so for only a few days or weeks at a time. As a result, the rest of the family does not accompany them and, consequently, family life is rarely disrupted during those times. This pattern will change as more Kutse children are sent to boarding school. At present, few children have attended school for more than a couple of years, if they have attended at all. This situation is changing rapidly. When I first visited the community in 1987, there were virtually no Kutse children in school; by 1994, 39 per cent. of the Basarwa children six and older attended boarding school ($n=31$; or another way

to view this is that of the twelve Basarwa families at Kutse, 42 per cent. send their children to boarding school).⁷

Gender equality and children. Draper (1975a: 90-1) postulates that the long birth spacing and few children per woman among nomadic Ju/'hoansi contribute to gender equality in that having fewer very young, dependent children permits greater mobility. While the length of birth spacing between children has shortened at Kutse, more children per woman has not led to reduced mobility, for several reasons. When a woman learns that she is pregnant, she immediately begins to wean the child currently being breast-fed. By the birth of the new child, the older sibling can be left in camp for long periods without needing the mother for feeding. Because it is rarely necessary for a woman to be absent for more than four to six hours at a time, her children can be cared for by a sharing partner or relative while she is gone. Particularly since wild plants are not as important as they once were, women spend much time visiting other camps where four- or five-year-olds can accompany them. In addition, grandmothers living at Kutse (but not necessarily occupying the same camp as their daughters) often carry an infant or toddler around for hours at a time while at their own camp or while visiting others. Grandfathers also commonly look after their grandchildren while their daughters or daughters-in-law are out of camp. Thus, Kutse women are not severely restricted by the shorter birth intervals common today.

Childcare for sedentary Kutse is similar to that described for the Ju/'hoansi, who still continue a traditional foraging, nomadic way of life (Draper 1992: 47). All Ju/'hoansi children, except for infants and very young toddlers, are left at camp under the supervision of either a man or a woman, often someone within a sharing partnership. Today many sedentary people are enjoying a much longer life span than they formerly had under nomadic conditions, when life was much more mobile and difficult. Babysitting at Kutse is a particularly common task for old men and women who can no longer hunt, trap, or collect plants. Unlike elsewhere in the Kalahari, and beyond, babysitting is not a task generally allocated to older siblings of either sex.

Even the pace of activities differs between Kutse and the settled communities studied by Draper. For example, Draper (1975b: 612) writes that:

on first visiting a settled !Kung village after staying with the bush groups one notices a certain bustle, a level of activity of various types which simply does not occur in the bush. Naturally, with a more complex economy based on cereal crops and goat herding, there is considerable work to be done. Harvested foods must be sorted, dried, and stored. Corn and sorghum require pounding, then grinding before they are ready to eat.

The pace has not changed at Kutse because these activities do not occur. The few Basarwa who plant gardens primarily grow a domestic form of melon, which is similar in use to the wild species. The government distributes corn and sorghum in a form that is already sorted and ground and only requires cooking. Analogous to the still nomadic and egalitarian Ju/'hoansi of the 1950s to 1960s, a striking amount of time at Kutse is available for entertainment (mostly in the form of talking) or napping. In fact, my own constant work routine (interviews, time allocation studies, and object inventories) is sometimes a source of amusement for Kutse residents; they attach little virtue to hard work.

Gender and ownership. As evidence of the presence of gender inequality among Nharo, Loermans reports that Ghanzi area women said that they do not own goats or other property and that any goats or property in the family are owned by their husbands (1992: 12). In contrast, Kutse women, when asked, admit to owning goats, as well as other property. However, they only acknowledged such ownership after I had worked in the community for many field seasons, had established rapport with them, and had made the query in a non-straightforward manner (e.g., as part of a general conversation rather than as a pointed interview question).

As discussed further elsewhere (Kent 1993a;1993b), ownership does not imply exclusive use at Kutse. Because the majority of activities are not gender-linked, most tools are not associated with only one sex. For example, a digging stick is not a 'woman's' tool any more than a spear is exclusively a 'man's' tool. Women use spears for a variety of activities, from stirring food to cutting (as with a knife); however, spears are probably most often used by men for hunting. Musical instruments, such as bows and thumb pianos, are used by both males and females. In reply to my question of whether there are exclusively male and female tasks, one male informant succinctly summed up the absence of sex-typed jobs at Kutse by stating, 'There is no job just for women; men help women' (Kent 1993a).

There are two possible reasons for the discrepancy between the Kutse and Ghanzi data on ownership: the first is methodological; the second has to do with the fact that Loermans worked with non-traditional Nharo in a missionary community. My participant-observation research at Kutse entails living (including sleeping and eating) in a camp with a family. I live from one to seven weeks in a camp, three to six weeks per field season being the most common duration with individual families.⁸ This type of fieldwork is very time-consuming compared to survey and interview research and to some time allocation studies where anthropologists live in their own separate camp and visit the people they are studying. Yet, intensive participant-observation research combined with interviews and other data collection techniques which include the entire community sometimes produces insights not easily attainable by other data collection methods. For example, when I first visited Kutse in 1987, almost all residents denied owning any goats. Only after several field seasons over many years did I realize why many of their denials were not accurate.⁹ Moreover, when I asked directly, 'Do some Basarwa have more things than others?' during my first interviews in 1987, many replied that they do not, even though it was obvious to all that some have more possessions than others.

The apparent contradictions are, in my view, the result of their ideological conception of ownership. Ideally, no one is supposed to own more than anyone else – that is, the ideal of egalitarianism is present even if in practice it does not exist. When talking amongst themselves, Kutse inhabitants sometimes complain to each other about having no goats or very few possessions when in fact neither is the case (e.g., two women sitting at a hearth in 1994 lamented to one another that they were so poor, they owned only the skirt or dress they were wearing, when actually each owned quite a few more). People are embarrassed to admit ownership of property and livestock. I attribute this embarrassment to a disjuncture between ideal and real behaviour. In theory no one should own

more goats or more possessions than others; everyone should have the same amount. In contrast, village Bakgalagadi tend to be proud of their possessions and the size of their herds.

In order to differentiate between ideal and real behaviour, interviews need to be accompanied by participant-observation fieldwork. I believe that the responses to my and Loermans's questions indicate that one cannot interpret answers without understanding the cultural context of both the question and the answer. Interviewing Basarwa who still adhere to an ideal of egalitarianism concerning ownership of property and possessions may not yield reliable information, as the responses have been taken out of their cultural context. People are not necessarily lying to the interviewer; they are merely stating what ownership is supposed to be and not what ownership is in actuality. The latter, what actually is owned, can best be attained through participant-observation fieldwork. As a consequence, I suggest that interviews must be conducted along with detailed participant-observation research and that the interview responses be interpreted in context of the information from that research.

Other possible reasons for the differences between my research and that of Loermans might stem from differences in Nharo culture, or in the rate of culture change experienced by the Nharo as compared to Kutse residents. It is conceivable that contemporary Ghanzi Basarwa are so different from Kutse residents that the reported differences are real, and not an artefact of methodology. It also is possible that Ghanzi women do not own anything while men do. Because data collection methods were not specified in Loermans's paper and, as far as one can tell, men were not interviewed, it is difficult to comment further. However, Guenther states that stock ownership among the Nharo is predominantly male, but not exclusively so as Loermans reports; instead, women in the 1960s and 1970s occasionally owned a head or two of small stock or even a donkey (Guenther 1994: personal communication). Barnard further states that Loermans's work describes a situation different from that which he observed in the Ghanzi District in the 1970s: 'There are also many differences between Nharo groups, and were then, in terms of patterns of acculturation' (Barnard 1994: personal communication). Therefore, the discrepancy could be attributed to the fact that Loermans worked with non-traditional Nharo at Kuru (Dekar), a mission and later non-government development project (Guenther 1994: personal communication). Nonetheless, I think the differences in field methodology better explain the discrepancies, including those between Loermans, Guenther and Barnard. Until more data are collected, I attribute Ghanzi women's claims of not owning anything to the ideal that no one is supposed to own more goats or other possessions. Ghanzi men, who have worked closely with Europeans and Bantu-speakers, may be less reluctant to admit ownership because of their exposure to different beliefs concerning possessions. Clearly more research is needed among various groups of Nharo.

Measuring gender relations: quantitative studies

Draper (1975a; 1975b) points out that sedentary men are more mobile than sedentary women in Ngamiland because many work for Bantu-speaking neighbours, herding livestock or earning wages in distant villages. In contrast, between 68 per cent. and 78 per cent. of those Kutse Basarwa interviewed had

not worked for Bantu-speakers during the nine to ten months prior to the interview (see table 1). Participant-observation fieldwork during 1988, 1989 and 1990 (listening to local gossip, etc.) validated those interview answers. To cross-check interview responses further, I asked people when possible about the work history of their spouses over the year. The percentages of males to females who did work for Bantu-speakers are very similar, except during 1994 when the sample size was smaller than the previous years and when there was a job programme which hired only men. During none of the three years was there a large difference in employment between males and females (table 1). This finding contrasts with the overwhelmingly male pattern of work which has been reported for both the Ju/'hoansi and Nharo (e.g., Draper 1975a; 1975b; 1992; Loermans 1992). According to Brooks *et al.* (1984), among Ju/'hoansi during the mid to late 1970s, 'five times as many men as women have fields (gardens), more than twice as many men as women own livestock, and the average number of work experiences is 3.05 for men but only 0.89 for women'. The reason that 50 per cent. of the Dobe Ju/'hoansi men had gardens compared to only 11.1 per cent. of the women results from their imitation of Batswana and Herero mixed pastoralism in which women do not usually work in the fields or herd cattle (Brooks *et al.* 1984). At Kutse a smaller percentage of people have gardens (the areas planted are too small to be considered fields by local definitions). Unlike at Dobe, many Kutse residents said that both men and women help in various garden tasks, including planting and sometimes harvesting.

I sought additional avenues to measure perceived gender differences at Kutse, including four interview questions asked during different field seasons between 1987 and 1990 (total sample size for all interviews is eighty-two persons – thirty-four males and forty-eight females).¹⁰ These particular questions were

TABLE 1. Number and percentage of men and women who worked for Bantu-speakers over the past nine to ten months prior to interview.

<i>Did you work for Bantu-speakers over the past 9-10 months? **</i>									
	1988			1989			1994		
	<i>Did not work</i>	<i>Did work</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Did not work</i>	<i>Did work</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Did not work</i>	<i>Did work</i>	<i>Total</i>
Total number interviewed n (%)	24 (73%)	9 (27%)	33	31 (78%)	9 (23%)	40	15 (68%)	7 (32%)	22
Number of males	8	3	11	12	4	16	6	4	10
Percent males	73%	27%		75%	25%		60%	40%	
Number of females	16	6	22	19	5	24	9	3	12
Percent females	73%	27%		79%	21%		75%	25%	

** Since I was last at Kutse.

asked to ascertain whether women had different responses from men, especially in areas that could be characterized as representing more traditional beliefs (a common assumption among some anthropologists is that men are less traditional because they spend more time away working and living with non-foragers). Since the marginalization of women has been particularly noted in the political sphere, some of the questions asked concern methods of dispute mediation, and others, the presence of chiefs. It seemed to me that different responses between the sexes might indicate departures from the more traditional pattern of a highly egalitarian political process, in which group decisions were based on consensus of male and female opinions and no one individual had more political influence than another, male or female. As with the questions about work history, all answers were cross-checked with participant-observation research.

In one case, I asked thirty men and women what they would do if they had a problem which they could not resolve by consulting family members. Responses that included talking to other people, soliciting help from extended family and other relatives, and seeking assistance from friends were coded as 'traditional', since they represent solutions described by Silberbauer (1981; 1982) and others studying traditional nomadic Central Kalahari Basarwa (also see Kent 1989). 'Nontraditional' responses were those that mentioned talking to a chief (e.g., the village Mokgalagadi chief in a town located 90 minutes' drive from Kutse).

I first tested to see if there is a significant relationship between gender and work experience or between gender and age category. There is none, indicating that women have not worked with Bantu-speakers more than men, or vice versa, and that neither sex in my sample is associated with one age group or another. For example, if the women had been primarily older and the men younger, inferences from the statistical analyses would have been less straightforward. A logistic regression reveals that there is no significant gender difference between the solutions sought to resolve problems (see table 2; for each question, the Hosmer and Lemeshow Goodness of Fit test is non-significant, meaning that the model is well-specified; furthermore, all interaction effects are negative, which means that there are no two independent variables with combined or joint effects on the dependent variable).

I then tested whether age (under or over approximately thirty-five years of age) or work experience (having worked one or more times for Bantu-speakers) are correlated with the solution sought when problems could not be resolved within the family. As was true for gender, there is no significant difference between age categories or work experience. The latter somewhat unexpected finding is caused by the tendency for most Kutse people who work for Bantu-speakers to do so briefly and sporadically. My interpretation is that those Kutse Basarwa who have worked for Bantu-speakers did so for too short a period to adopt their resolution or mediation strategies. In other words, briefly working for Bantu-speakers does not seem greatly to have influenced or altered Kutse Basarwa views on problem-solving.

In addition, I asked forty-seven individuals whether there is a chief of the Basarwa. The expectation was that more traditional residents, and perhaps more women, would say no, since traditionally Central Kalahari Basarwa did not have

chiefs. I ran a logistical regression with the three most common responses as the dependent variable: 'no chief of the Basarwa', 'do not know if there is a chief', and 'there is a chief of the Basarwa'. All independent variables tested were non-significant, including gender, age category, work experience, and combinations of each (table 2). Interviewees were also asked if they thought that there was a chief of the Bakgalagadi ($n=47$). The same variables as those for the presence of a chief of the Basarwa were tested: 'no', 'yes', and 'do not know'. I anticipated that those more familiar with Bakgalagadi customs would say yes (i.e., males) and the others would say no or that they did not know (i.e., females). As was true with the question concerning the presence of a chief of the Basarwa, none of the answers is significantly associated with gender, work experience, age category, nor a combination of each (table 2).

Lastly, informants were asked if they, themselves, have a chief. Although national Botswana law dictates that all people are under the jurisdiction of a chief, most Kutse Basarwa do not recognize this. There is no significant difference in responses between the sexes or between older and younger interviewees. However, work history is significantly associated with whether or not someone thought he or she had a chief (table 2). For those who had never worked for a Bantu-speaker, the chance (odds ratio) of their saying that they do not have a chief is twice as high (2.0) as compared to those who had worked for Bantu-speakers. Important for this article is the fact that the variable concerning whether or not one has a chief is *not* gender-linked (table 2). In sum, and regardless of the sex of the informant, it does *not* appear that gender has an influence on beliefs concerning some aspects of the political system. The interview data presented here provide additional support for my observations of extremely egalitarian gender relations at Kutse (discussed further in Kent 1993a).

TABLE 2. Quantitative logical regression of interview answers from Kutse adults.

INTERVIEW QUESTION	SAMPLE SIZE (n)	No. of Males	No. of Females	MALE-FEMALE	YES WORKED FOR BANTU-SPEAKERS—NO NEVER WORKED FOR BANTU-SPEAKERS	OLDER-YOUNGER
What do you do when you have a problem that cannot be solved by the immediate family?	30	18	12	Chi-Square = 4.17 $p = 0.7452$	Chi-Square = 0.07 $p = 0.7944$	Chi-Square = 0.06 $p = 0.8043$
Is there a chief of the Basarwa?	47	20	27	Chi-Square = 1.55 $p = 0.4616$	Chi-Square = 2.55 $p = 0.2799$	Chi-Square = 5.94 $p = 0.0513$
Is there a chief of the Bakgalagadi?	47	20	27	Chi-Square = 4.65 $p = 0.0977$	Chi-Square = 4.11 $p = 0.1282$	Chi-Square = 0.87 $p = 0.6457$
Do you have a Chief?	40	23	17	Chi-Square = 0.27 $p = 0.6020$	Chi-Square = 4.17 $p = 0.0411^*$	Chi-Square = 0.27 $p = 0.6042$

*Significant difference at the 0.05 level.

The role of some development programmes in eroding gender equality

As noted by both Molamu (1992) and by Loermans (1992), some development programmes in Botswana inadvertently promote inequality. For example, there were two wage-generating government projects available for Kutse residents during 1993, each lasting six or more months. The project that was more local, and of shorter duration than the other hired only males (which explains why such a large percentage of men compared to women had worked over a nine-to ten-month period prior to my 1994 interviews; table 1). However, the larger Botswana government project, which involved building firebreaks and roads, hired both men and women. The government paid both sexes the same wages and both were expected to perform the same tasks. By contrast, some current foreign-sponsored development programmes implemented among various Basarwa groups seem to exacerbate gender disparity by institutionalizing inequality. Development programmes in the Ghanzi District (but not in the Kweneng District where Kutse is located) provide every head of a household, who is defined as male only – female heads of a household without a male are not included – with two cows (Loermans 1992: 12). In addition, only men are allocated ploughs and other agricultural tools (Loermans 1992: 13). These programmes typically exclude women or, at best, make it difficult for women to participate:

Development efforts provided more benefits to men than to women and land use and conservation policies generally ignored women's interests. Women are gradually cut off from important natural and economic resources, and are caught in a process of marginalisation (Loermans 1992: 1).

A Kutse example of a development scheme that was established through Western assistance illustrates the patriarchal values that are inherent in some projects. The programme was designed to generate wages in areas lacking job opportunities. In order to participate in the project, two Kutse residents would have to go to a distant village for several weeks to obtain training. Young women encumbered with nursing children cannot live several weeks in a faraway village where there are no relatives to help with childcare. If a woman's children are already weaned, she can leave them with a relative at Kutse, but this is much more difficult to do when a woman has a breast-feeding toddler. While mothers can leave older still-nursing three-year-old children with babysitters for a few days, it is a hardship to leave them for several weeks at a time. Men with children can leave them with their wives at Kutse. Because no attempt was made to provide for childcare while training at the distant village, lactating women could not participate in the project. Therefore, two men were selected.¹¹

Based on my limited experiences with development programmes, I concur with Molamu (1992) and Loermans (1992) that some projects, in certain cases subtly and in others not so subtly, encourage gender inequality while attempting to provide economic equality with the more prosperous Kalahari groups (e.g., with Bakgalagadi and Batswana). On occasion, men are excluded from opportunities because of the programme designers' beliefs that there are exclusively male and female tasks, although Loermans (1992) suggests that women are negatively effected by such programmes more often than are men. There have not been enough development projects at Kutse to verify if women are discriminated against in development programmes significantly more than men.

However, it is interesting to note that there was another Western-conceived development project for Kutse residents in 1994 which assumed that only women gather plants. Therefore, only women were eligible for the brief training programme.

Development and inequality need not be intertwined. Development schemes should be designed without inherent biases against either sex in training, programme execution, and evaluation. The challenge is to allow sedentism and economic change to flourish in those areas in which they are wanted without forcing changes in attitudes towards gender. Development and aid projects with institutionalized gender inequality need to be reconsidered.

Interpretations

I interpret the qualitative findings from systematic observations and the quantitative findings from Kutse interviews to indicate that the change in gender equality among sedentary Ngamiland Basarwa noted by Draper is not present among sedentary Kutse Basarwa. Statistically, there is no domain in which men and women differ significantly. The absence of any difference in the responses between the sexes is because, I suggest, sedentary Kutse males and females do not differ significantly in status or power. In other words, gender roles in economic, social, political, family and other facets of life among sedentary Kutse residents are equivalent in terms of their egalitarian nature (while perhaps sometimes differing from them in kind) to the gender roles and relationships present when they were nomadic.

In contrast, a loss of equality as first described by Draper has been noted by other researchers in the Kalahari and attributed to similar causes. Sedentarization is implicated as one source of the recent inequality. Other factors contributing to a new loss of female empowerment are the adoption of neighbouring people's patriarchal attitudes, and the implementation of development schemes that promote one sex over the other through access to or restriction from resources.

I agree with Guenther (1983-84) and Loermans (1992) that changes in gender equality in the Kalahari are encouraged by the acquisition of Bantu-speakers' customs (or in the case of the Nharo, European customs). Egalitarian groups thereby have incorporated some of the strongly patriarchal attitudes along with the profound economic changes characteristic of their neighbours. Among these groups, hunting and gathering are no longer important activities. Foraging has been replaced with a mixed subsistence strategy that emphasizes agro-pastoralism and employment, both of which are male-dominated activities in the neighbouring societies. Massive economic transformation has resulted in changes throughout Ju/'hoansi and Nharo culture: sharing patterns have broken down, politics are more male-oriented, division of labour is increasingly rigid, and architecture and camp layout now promote privacy and the accumulation of possessions. All these factors contribute to an erosion of formerly egalitarian values and attitudes.

One reason why Kutse differs from other sedentary communities in the Kalahari is that stratified, hierarchical groups do not reside there. Kutse is not a cattlepost, nor do a large number of residents work for Bantu-speakers or Europeans. Sedentism itself does not result in the sex-typing of adult work. Rather,

the inegalitarian cultural attitudes of groups from whom subsistence tasks are borrowed alter gender roles and relations in the Kalahari. An additional reason why Kutse differs from elsewhere is that in spite of some changes in the economy, foraging through traditional methods is still the dominant subsistence endeavour. Perhaps in part as a consequence, sharing networks are intact and extremely important in social relationships, spatial patterning of individual camps, and other realms of culture. If wage work becomes more common and discrepancies in wealth much more pronounced, people may be less willing to share with their sharing partners. I have referred to sharing as the adhesive that holds a highly egalitarian society together (Kent 1993a), and the dissolution of sharing networks would have far-reaching repercussions.

Sedentary peoples, including Kutse residents, accumulate more possessions than they could while nomadic and without animal or motorized transportation. According to Draper (1975a; 1975b), this accumulation leads to an attachment to place and more substantial dwellings, thereby reinforcing restricted mobility. While also true at Kutse, these particular factors do not then erode gender equality because, among other things, the sharing system is still operating. Sedentism *per se* does not corrode the gender symmetry observed among many traditionally nomadic Basarwa groups.

At the same time and potentially contributing to changing views of gender, Western societies have designed some development programmes for the Kalahari that may undermine egalitarianism. By recognizing the biases inherent in Western societies, such as gender inequality, development agencies can avoid changing facets of culture that many, both within and outside Basarwa society, perceive as positive (i.e., male-female equality) and implement changes of those that are perceived as negative (i.e., the lack of jobs in rural areas).

It is not unexpected that massive changes in one facet of culture – in this case economics – alters other aspects. It would be difficult to adopt solely the economic system from a neighbouring society without also adopting other parts of their life, including beliefs concerning males and females. Westerners sometimes forget that many small-scale societies are organized with each part of their culture intimately integrated with the others. Instead, they tend to view culture as composed of somewhat compartmentalized parts (e.g., economics, politics, social structure, gender and age relations, etc.). The belief that each part is independent is a projection of Western culture with its stratification, hierarchies and compartmentalization (however, these parts are probably much less autonomous than many suspect; Kent 1984). The classic example of a seemingly minor change in material culture – steel axes replacing stone axes – which precipitated an avalanche of change in other realms of culture, occurred in an Australian Aborigine society (Sharp 1952; also see Gardner 1988: 105 discussing southern Indian foragers, and Turnbull 1983: 154 on the Mbuti). Economic change on such a massive scale as is presently occurring in the Kalahari should be no less all-encompassing.

It is interesting to note that the kind of interaction between Basarwa and Bantu-speakers has changed over the past decade. Formerly the relationship between these groups was primarily one of trade, where I suggest relatively little acculturation occurred on either side (which is supported by the archaeology of Dobe and /Xai/Xai; Yellen & Brooks 1988; 1990). Today, in some parts of the

Kalahari, this relationship has changed dramatically to one of acculturation. The reasons for this change are complex and need to be explored in a separate article.

Conclusion

The Kutse data show that the initial shift to sedentism by itself does not lead to gender inequality. Currently the loss of egalitarianism reported for sedentary Ju/'hoansi and Nharo can be attributed to factors other than sedentism. A loss of egalitarianism in a number of Basarwa groups, visible between the sexes as well as between children and adults, has been caused by an emulation of the customs of neighbouring Bantu-speakers, including gender inequality, as well as the adoption of their economy and technology. Because the organization of economics and technology are closely interrelated with the organization of social, political and other facets of culture, modification of the former influences change in the latter. It is the very nature of culture and how its parts fit together that make it difficult, perhaps even impossible, to instigate fundamental change in one realm without altering the others.

Since it is apparent that sedentism *per se* does not promote gender inequality, what other factor correlated with sedentism engenders the loss of egalitarianism when close interaction with, and emulation of, patriarchal societies are absent? I am exploring the nature of aggregation and its possible influence on formerly dispersed groups, but that is the topic of another article (Kent n.d.a). Whatever the cause of inequality, mobility patterns by themselves do not influence gender egalitarianism. This interpretation, then, has enormous implications for understanding culture change both for the present and in the past.

NOTES

I am most grateful to the people of Kutse who have been so patient and kind in helping me to understand their way of life. This article is dedicated to Willy (born sometime between 1968 and 1972 and died 1993) – my field assistant, teacher and friend. I will miss him terribly.

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¹ While Central Kalahari Basarwa may have been more egalitarian than traditional Ju/'hoansi, this article examines the reported change in gender relations and the causes of that change, not group gender relations *per se*, though these are discussed in Kent (n.d.b).

² Although Richard Lee (1993: personal communication) observed Ju/'hoansi men collecting water at Dobe in 1987, it does not negate the point Draper is making – the division of labour by sex is more rigid than it was while people were still nomadic. As discussed in Kent (in press b), the Basarwa and similar small-scale band level societies are extremely flexible and the collection of water by men or women may be variable even within the same ethnic group.

³ The game reserve is spelt either of two ways – with an 'h' or without. I use Khutse to designate the game reserve and Kutse without an 'h' to designate the community.

⁴ The community might be spatially quite different if people were forced to live at Kutse. The Chum!kwe Ju/'hoansi community located in Namibia is a sad example of what happens when people are forced off their land and have no alternative but to settle in a village and find non-traditional ways to support themselves (Kent & Lee 1992; J. Marshall & Ritchie 1984; Volkman 1982).

⁵ Lee (1993: 131) writes that the Herero are patriarchal, particularly in comparison to the Ju/'hoansi. As a result, Ju/'hoansi women face a number of difficulties if they marry Herero men, including lower status based on gender (Lee 1993: 131). According to Alverson (1978: 49), southern Bantu-speaking peoples in general have a rigidly segregated and hierarchically stratified society in terms of gender. For example, Batswana women are considered minors, regardless of their age, and therefore are regarded as not 'competent to enter contracts or make binding agreements without their husbands' consent or assistance' (Molamu 1992: 82). In addition, Batswana women do not have access to land, labour, draught power, arable-inputs and technology, expertise and capital necessary to be economically viable on their own (Molamu 1992: 85). Schapera (1984: 37) summarizes Batswana gender relations as socially differentiated, wherein women and men 'sit apart at feasts and other social gatherings and certain spots in the village, like the *kgotla* (council-place), are normally reserved for men. Sons are preferred as children, and a woman bearing daughters only is often despised. There is a well-defined division of labour between the sexes, certain tasks being traditionally allotted to each'. Moreover, women are subject to the authority of male guardians and are excluded from political assemblies, while formerly women were likewise debarred from officiating at sacrifices and other religious ceremonies (Schapera 1984: 37).

⁶ It would be interesting to examine the effects of social and economic change while keeping mobility constant, but I am not aware of any modern Basarwa group for whom such a study would be feasible.

⁷ Since 1989 some of the children who do not attend boarding school take a class five days a week at Kutse which teaches reading and writing in Setswana. Because the class is held at Kutse and is solely concerned with reading and writing, it is not as significant as boarding-schools as an agent of culture change.

⁸ My time at Kutse through the years has been divided among three groups: two different and separate sharing networks each consisting of two to four individual camps located adjacent to or near one another, and one camp occupied by a family which does not participate in a sharing network.

⁹ This is taking into account the fact that some people herd goats for relatives, friends, or in a few isolated cases, for village Bakgalagadi, and therefore may not own any goats while still having a few head corralled at their camp.

¹⁰ Interviews were not conducted in 1991, in order to comply with the Botswana government's request that researchers not interview anyone six months prior to the start of their national census.

¹¹ One man left the workshop and returned to Kutse. The other man finished, but never utilized the skills which he had learned.

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La sédentarisation contribue-t-elle à l'inégalité des sexes? Etude d'un cas en provenance du Kalahari

Résumé

On a dit que la sédentarisation a joué un rôle déterminant dans la réduction de l'égalité entre les sexes dans certaines sphères de la vie des peuples Ju/'hoansi (!Kung) et Nharo Basarwa (Bushmen), autrefois nomades. Leur adoption d'une vie sédentaire se serait accompagnée de transformations économiques importantes, causant à leur tour un changement d'attitude par rapport aux sexes. On examine l'égalité sexuelle chez les Basarwa du Kalahari central vivant à Kutse, une communauté sédentaire où les changements économiques et l'imitation des peuples avoisinants ont été moins prononcés que dans le reste du Kalahari. Des études quantitatives et qualitatives montrent qu'à Kutse l'égalité sexuelle continue à prédominer. L'auteur suggère que la sédentarité des populations de chasseurs-cueilleurs ne se traduit pas nécessairement par un amoindrissement des valeurs et des relations égalitaires. Pour l'auteur, c'est plutôt l'adoption des systèmes économiques et des comportements caractérisant les peuples non-forageurs limitrophes qui faciliterait l'émergence de l'inégalité entre les sexes au sein des sociétés Botswana reconnues pour leur égalitarisme passé. D'autre part, l'auteur démontre que les programmes de développement actuels, conçus par des occidentaux, excluent les femmes et accélèrent les processus inégalitaires naissants.

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